DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 128 694 CG 010 800

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TITLE Teacher Support.
PUB DATE Apr 76
NOTE 31p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; *Group Counseling; Group Relations; Human Development; *Interpersonal Relationship; *Personal Growth; Program Descriptions; *Reinforcement; Speeches; Teacher Improvement; *Teacher Morale; *Teachers

ABSTRACT

Because of fast changes in educational theory and methodology, behaviorally threatening atmosphere, changes in student responses and attitudes, administrative expectations, and general tensions, most teachers need more support relationships than ever before. Tensions in many schools are high and daily frustrations exist. Teachers are concerned about open education, behavior modification, humanistic education, informal techniques, accountability and test results. Many teachers are high achievers who set severe goals for themselves and live with a high level of fear of failure. More requirements and criticisms come from the community. One Georgia school system has begun a teacher-support program to encourage personal sharing and support within the system. This was done through the use of transactional analysis and other personal reinforcing techniques in groups after school one afternoon a week for six to eight weeks. The groups are organized by the principal or school counselor with leadership provided by the Counseling and Psychological Services departments. Teacher response has been highly favorable with requests made to principals for additional service. (Author)

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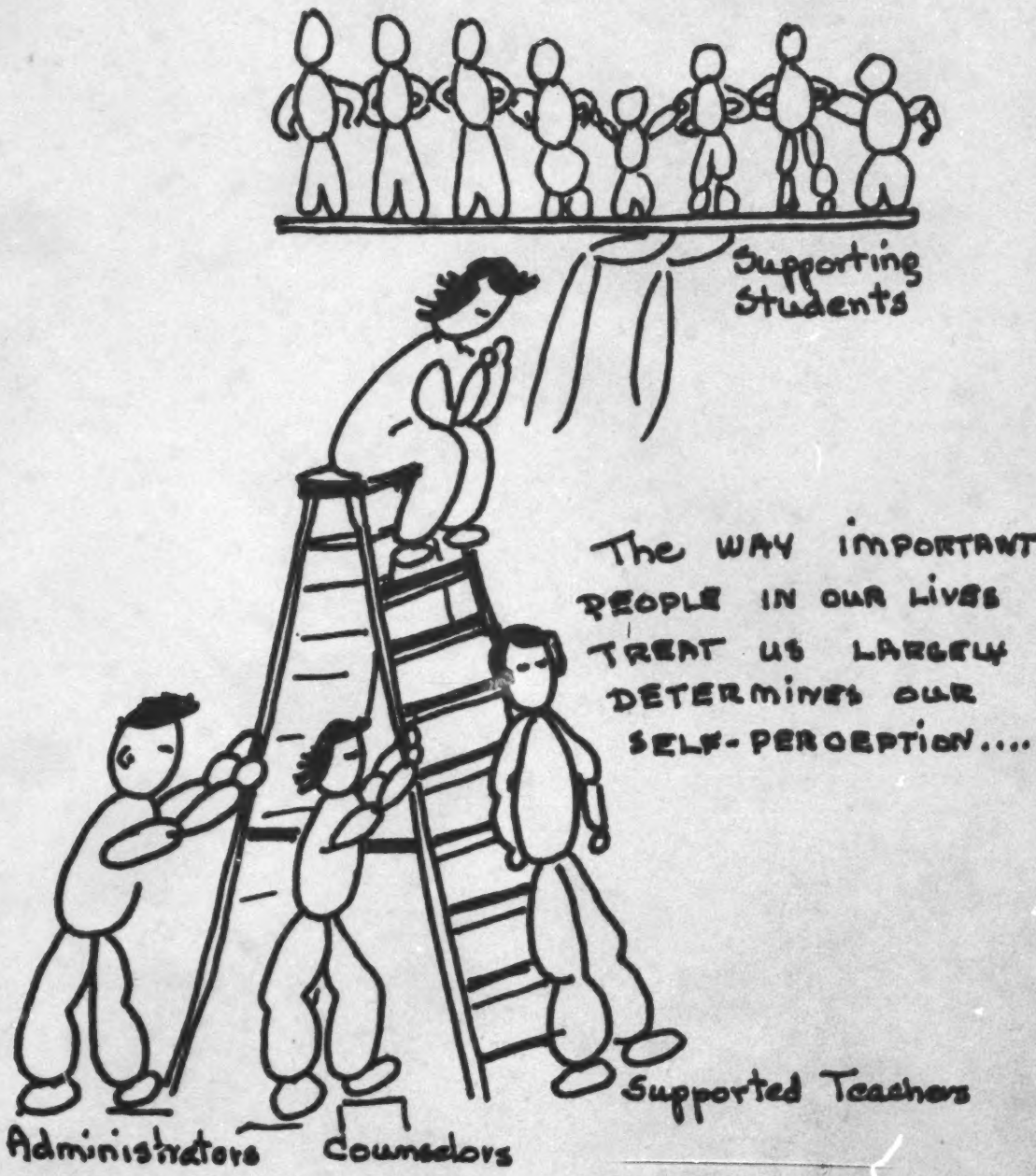

The WAY IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN OUR LIVES TREAT US LARGELY DETERMINES OUR SELF-PERCEPTION....

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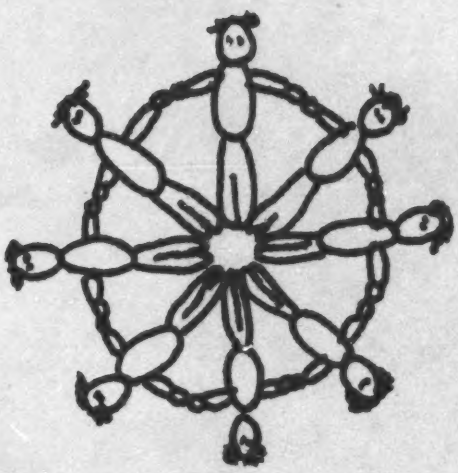

When the teacher finds himself in community, he will transmit to students a feeling of belonging.

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April 1976

This paper is the basis of a presentation made at APGA National Convention in Chicago in April 1976. The paper results from much concern related to teacher need as observed by the writer who has traveled to hundreds of schools leading many "relationship" workshops over the past ten years. It also results from a voluntary project which evolved in the Gwinnett County Schools using Transactional Analysis as a basis for teacher growth groups. (See Elementary Guidance and Counseling Journal, October, 1976).

The author has personally led many T.A. workshops in cooperation with a school psychologist in the Gwinnett County Schools. More than 400 teachers in that school system have been involved in small personal growth groups with an additional 75 or more in larger faculty meetings. It would never be implied that all of these have been highly successful if personal growth can be measured as successful or not successful. However, the demand has continued with 59 teachers driving across the county to a central location after school hours during the 1974-75 session to participate.

The author has been a teacher/counselor in a large high school and has worked over ten years in elementary schools. She is certified in both areas as a teacher, as a school psychometrist, and as a Specialist in Counseling. She has worked in Special Education for four years, screening and coordinating a program in EMR, LD, and BD. She is currently coordinator of the Guidance and Counseling Program in Gwinnett County, Lawrenceville, Georgia--a school system with 38

counselors who have been innovative and creative in concept. Presentations have been made by the author at APGA in New Orleans, New York, Chicago, and the National Elementary Conference in Tampa in 1975. She has also presented at the Georgia School Counselors Convention for the past three years, at the International Transactional Analysis Conference in San Francisco in 1974, and at the Harris Institute in Transactional Analysis in Sacramento.

In 1975, the author received the honorable mention award from ASCA in professional writing, and in 1976, she received the national award from ASCA as Counseling Administrator of the Year. She is a member of the International Platform Association.

RATIONALE

With the increased realization that the backbone of a successful school is a staff of people positively involved with each other, who care for each other, and who work and plan together cooperatively in the best interest of the students, it is imminent that schools find ways to implement such an atmosphere (Roberts 1974). Also, realizing that teacher loneliness and isolation can be a tension producing situation where teachers cannot function at their highest potential is cause for taking some forward steps toward providing an atmosphere whereby teachers can vent feelings, explore personal strengths and weaknesses, and increase involvement with each other.

These opportunities to circumvent problems by reducing isolation and lowering frustration can increase positive teacher/student relationships and increase the effectiveness of the climate for learning (Robert 1974).

Many educational approaches toward humanistic concepts in public education have been explored in the past few years. The recognition of the depersonalization of the current American society, the numerical identification, and the factual approach to teaching has provoked much

investigation in reaching for a more relaxed atmosphere for the educational climate. Teacher isolation can encourage student isolation. As teachers are separated by rooms, departments, curriculum, subject matter, and other extraneous divisions so students can be separated from other students. Although teachers' lounges and coffee breaks may offer some reinforcement, it seems that organized, structured teacher groups with a leader provide more satisfactory opportunity for ventilation, increased supportive relationships, and more positive self-esteem.

Numerous terms such as self-concept, self-perception, self-image, self-structure, and self-esteem have been employed to characterize the organization of beliefs that a person holds toward himself--what he perceives himself to be. Rogers (1951) describes the evolution of the self as follows: "As a result of interaction with the environment and particularly as a result of evaluational interaction with others, the structure of self is formed--an organized, fluid, but consistent conceptual pattern of perceptions of characteristics and relationships of the 'I' or the 'me' together with values attached to these concepts (page 248).

"The way important people in our lives treat us largely determines our self-perception. These persons

help us learn who we are and what we are. The personal evaluations that they make of us become part of our self-structure. From them we learn whether we are capable or incapable, likable or unlikable, lovable or unlovable, valuable or worthless (Gazda 1973, p.2). How they regard us is generally how we regard ourselves. The self, then, is partly built of the reflected appraisal of persons important to us. Because these persons have significant effects on our personality development, they are sometimes referred to as "significant others" (Gazda, 1973, p.2).

The "I'm OK, You're OK" life position described by Harris in his recent best seller by that name, is the position which people maintain in order to achieve fullest potential. This position is required for open, intimate, close relationships. According to Steiner, Eric Berne held to a strong belief in the basic soundness of people and the concept that problems occur not from what goes on inside people but from what goes on between people. He believed that human beings are by nature capable of living in harmony with themselves, each other, and nature. He believed that relationships were to be equal in responsibility though sometimes different in tasks--that the contract, a simple agreement between two persons, places those responsibilities on both parties. A good relationship

is based on the assumption that both parties or groups of people are interested in doing things for each other. When that is the case it would appear that one person need simply ask for what he wants and it would follow that the other person would do everything within his power to make it happen. This is the case when the relationships operate smoothly and both parties are getting what they want, but when the process breaks down, it is likely that people will begin to use power plays to satisfy themselves (Steiner, 1974).

The assumptions of working together by mutual consent instead of power play can lead to increased self-esteem on the part of teacher/administrator, teacher/teacher, teacher/student, with mutual successes. In the relationship of teacher/student, although the teacher may oftentimes be placed in the authority role, he can maintain in accord with his own sense of OKness an atmosphere of respect for the student's ability to contract for a task and maintenance of an equally winning relationship. After all, when the teacher sees the student as capable and responsible the reflection tends to follow reciprocally.

Teacher loneliness causes wall-building instead of bridge-building, "I'm not loveable...and I'll prove it!" Therefore, the NOT OK child is busy with familiar sounds--

I haven't gotten a thing done
I'm always wrong
I know I can't
You always win
You're smarter than I am
You're always right
You always get your way
You're so efficient
You're so organized

The "kicks" that come back are

What's wrong with you anyway?
I can't stand your lousy attitude
Do you think you could ever handle success?
How come you're so negative?

These persons have not learned to handle the positive concepts which come in the "OK" position which is based on thought, faith, and the wager of action (Tanner, 1973, p. 30). The understanding of OK is not bound by personal experiences because there is a transcendence of personal experiences into an abstraction of ultimate purpose for all men (Harris 1969). There is a drifting into a new position because of a decision made by the person himself.

As the teacher begins this process of progressing toward the OK position, with positive authority reducing power play and with positive contact in relationship, a new quality begins to emerge. Instead of continual put-down among teachers/staff there is a continual pull-up. Teachers released to share themselves with each other tend to emerge as saving, stimulating forces, energizing each other with increased productiveness and

creativity. As this emerging takes place, it follows that it is communicated to the classroom where students tend to pick up energy from the processing in the faculty attitude and atmosphere. Thus, a continuing atmosphere of energy is conducted.

It is apparent that teacher self-esteem is highly related to student self-esteem--that the teacher who feels confident, warm, and open with students tends to produce a classroom atmosphere where students can more readily express warmth and openness in relationships and more comfortably attack learning skills. Whatever caused a student to feel accepted or happy with himself provides this necessary motivation, and it is usually based on positive involvement with other persons in the school.

Specific warm and personal teacher actions toward students, such as eye contact, touching reassuringly, smiling often, calling students by name, complimenting students on something personal or some accomplishment, knowing about students' families, using honest praise, making affirmative verbal contact with each student in a room at least once a day, make a classroom atmosphere into a real learning climate (Roberts 1974).

Since the role of the teacher is determined largely by heavy injunctions which are replayed to students, increased self-awareness on the part of the teacher should reduce the unnecessary dogma transmitted to the student. Teachers are often burdened with such heavy goals as:

Teachers are perfect
Teachers know all the answers
Teachers solve all the problems
Teachers work out all their personal problems
Teachers love all kids
Teachers do not get angry
Teachers always speak in a soft voice
Teachers love to serve humanity
Teachers tell people what they should do
Teachers are in good control of the class
Teachers know the subject matter well
Teachers should be physically strong
mentally alert
morally straight

With such a heavy load to bear many teachers suffer from extreme pressures and guilt. Many also work without the benefit of sufficient "stroking" because administrators and peers lack awareness and ability to provide positive recognition. A teacher cannot be expected to project warm, positive feelings for students if he lacks necessary personal human nourishment (Hannaford 1974).

Teachers want to feel "OK" within themselves and to learn how to project "you're OK" to students. The problems of the school essentially are the problems of

individuals, both students and teachers, and administrators. As self-awareness increases, perhaps through teacher group counseling, both teachers and students will benefit.

Robert (1974) reminds us that in our preoccupation with broad programs and systems, we have ignored the need for human interaction within the schools and the personal needs of the students and teachers who live there from four to ten hours a day, five days a week, during the school year. Verifying this concept, Robert quotes from the NEA Journal "One often gets the eerie impression of huge clouds of educational reform drifting back and forth from coast to coast and only occasionally touching down to blanket an actual educational institution (Robert 1974, p. xii)."

Robert also points out that teachers who do not achieve professional self-worth suffer a type of loneliness and pain that may influence from thirty to one hundred and fifty students each day. He says that professional loneliness can be defined as the feeling experienced by teachers that no one cares about them or what they do in the school; that they are just expected to hold the lid on; that the expedient course of action is the way to survive. These feelings are grounded in a lack of psychic support,

and are manifest in many ways such as teacher anxieties, teacher antagonisms, teacher absenteeism and resignations and teacher fears. Many teachers feel that the school environment keeps them and the students uninvolved and lonely.

In quoting, Robert (1974) also emphasizes that Dr. William Glasser, speaking before the National Association of Elementary School Principals, described his Schools Without Failure Program by saying:

> A school without failure first of all has to have a faculty without failure. You can't have a faculty feeling failure...A faculty that feels we don't care much about each other... a faculty that doesn't interact with each other and feel friendly and involved. And this is again something easy to say, but it has to be done. And it can only be done if you set a time to do it (p.9).

Glasser continued that there is a direct correlation between involved faculties and involved students. The staff must get involved in order to help students get involved (Robert 1974).

Teachers need to know each other as persons in order to work together effectively and professionally. This doesn't mean that they must be close friends or plan their social lives around the school. But there seems to be a direct correlation between the friendliness among teachers and the climate of learning for the students. In schools where

teachers truly are well acquainted, compared with those in which this is not true, there seems to be: 1) more consideration in planning and sharing the use of time and supplies 2) less defensiveness 3) more concensus and sense of direction, and 4) a more hospitable climate for the assimilation of new personnel.

In looking at the effect on students, Robert points out that students are asking such existential questions as "Am I a good person?" as early as kindergarten. They are demanding increased personal involvement in order to establish themselves in relation to other students and teachers within a system that traditionally placed a low priority on this kind of interaction (Robert 1974).

One element necessarily involved in teacher growth is increased awareness. In Eric Berne's best seller (Berne 1964) he describes awareness as the capacity to see a coffeepot and hear the birds sing in one's own way and not the way one was taught. It may be assumed on good grounds that seeing and hearing have a different quality for infants than for grown-ups and that they are more esthetic and less intellectual in the first years of life. Berne believed that most of the members of the human race have lost the capacity to be painters, poets or musicians, and are not left the option of seeing and hearing directly even if they can afford to. He

pointed out that awareness requires living in the here and now, and not in the elsewhere, the past or the future. The aware person is alive because he knows how he feels, where he is and when it is. He knows that after he dies the trees will still be there, but he will not be there to look at them again, so he wants to see them now with as much poignancy as possible.

The teacher who is living in the now and transmitting to students the joy of experiencing the moment will be the teacher who has increased in her awareness and her appreciation of her surroundings. Berne (1964) believed that "For certain fortunate people there is something which transcends all classifications of behavior, and that is awareness: something which rises above the programming of the past, and that is spontaneity; and something that is more rewarding than games, and that is intimacy...This may mean that there is no hope for the human race, but there is hope for individual members of it (p. 184)."

The goal of the group experience for teachers is a healthy growth atmosphere which will provide a model for classroom experience. In Alan Dahms' writings (Dahms, 1972) on emotional intimacy, he comments on the need for more heal y persons. The healthy person has a capacity for intimacy which is characterized by several observations.

He cares for himself and realizes his uniqueness. He feels "enough" to cope with life and places highest priorities on human relationships. He cares for others. He worries as long as one man is hungry or in need. He feels personal responsibility and sees all others as "me". He lives in the now and realizes that life is made up of a series of now experiences. He is spontaneous in expressing himself and abhors the hypocrisy so common at the strictly intellectual level of relating. Further, he does not find it necessary to label and stereotype. He can relate in authentic ways to persons, without categorizing them as black, white, or authority figures. He shows an excitement at being alive and actively meets his world on his own terms.

Dahms indicates that the potential for emotional solidarity is both threatening and hopeful. All great changes in human consciousness have caused deep concern and anxiety. Increased involvement in the formal and informal helping relationships through volunteer programs is extremely important. Educators will come to see themselves as liberators, not controllers. They will help people to be themselves so that students can use intellectual and creative capacities in more productive ways. The perceptions of the instructor in organization, toward

other people, toward self and his professional task are critically important. To be effective he must see himself as adequate to meet the demands of his own life, enjoying a feeling of closeness, for he sees himself as an attractive being.

Ira Tanner (1974) emphasizes responsibility for the nature of choices in handling feelings. It is not what happens to us, he says, that is important. It is how we choose to react to what happens to us. He deals with the loneliness that affects every person. There are no privileged few and no immunization against the disease. Without exception, he says, every little person is lonely. Loneliness has its beginnings in childhood sometime between the ages of one and three. He quoted H. L. Mencken as saying, "The one permanent emotion of the inferior man is fear (p. 4)." Because feelings of inferiority, based upon a fear of love, are a basic condition of childhood, no one escapes loneliness. In the process of dealing with this loneliness, we tend to escape the responsibility for our fear of love. Most of the loneliness that we feel is of our own doing. We continue to play the popular game "if it weren't for you." Loneliness is not separation from people in a physical sense but separation from them emotionally. It is being close physically, but feeling distant emotionally...because of our fear of love.

Tanner also suggests that whatever our belief concerning the nature of man or the reasons for our loneliness, one thing is certain. As we become more responsible for our fear of love, our times of aloneness become less and less cluttered with debris; they become moments that we anticipate rather than dread, times out of which new appreciation, awareness, and decisions flow.

Claude Steiner (1974) set forth his belief that the "I'm OK, You're OK" life position is the position people need to have in order to achieve their fullest potential. It is not intended to promote the notion that all of people's actions are acceptable. The existential position "I'm OK, You're OK" is the point of view required in intimate, close relationships in order for emotional and social well-being to be possible. Berne (1964) looked on people as what it is that this person is exposed to in the way of social interaction and pressures which make his behavior and feelings quite adequately explainable. Steiner (1974) stated that human beings are, by nature, inclined to and capable of living in harmony with themselves, each other, and nature.

In relationship to teacher needs, Steiner (1974) suggests that large numbers of people in this country are in a constant unsuccessful quest for a successful, loving

relationship. Lack of adequate stroking is one large strand of human suffering. The result is various degrees of depression with feelings of being unloved and/or unlovable. Scripting, then contributes to this need and to the degree of autonomy which a person permits himself. A person with a script is invariably disadvantaged in terms of his own autonomy or life potentials. The distinction between good and bad is based on whether or not it has socially redeeming features. Liberation, awareness and spontaneity open for the person some discretion as to which part of his teachings he will accept. This should release the capacity of free and joyful expression of the Natural Child. It should never be overlooked that people need to know what kind of strokes they want. People have specific needs for specific strokes which are too often kept secret. Therefore, when the teacher learns to identify his own needs and wants and can accept these realistically, he can provide more permissiveness and opportunity for his students to identify and express their own needs. According to Steiner, it is only when a person has learned to ask for strokes, to give strokes, and to give himself strokes freely, and when he has learned to relate to people in such a way that strokes from other people are forthcoming, that it will be possible to give up the lovelessness script.

Muriel James and Dorothy Jongeward (1971) in their book Born to Win, carefully describe the characteristics of a winner and a loser. They believe that when a person is being a loser, he is not using his intellect appropriately. He is misusing it by rationalizing and intellectualizing. When rationalizing, he gives excuses to make his actions seem plausible. When intellectualizing, he tries to snow others with his verbiage. Consequently, much of his potential remains dormant, unrealized, and unrecognized. When a person wants to discover and change his "losing streak," when he wants to become more like the winner he was born to be, he can use special therapies and techniques to make change happen. The authentic winning person experiences the reality of himself by knowing himself, being himself, and becoming a credible, responsive person. He actualizes his own unprecedented uniqueness and appreciates the uniqueness of others.

In furthering knowledge concerning the relationship of Transactional Analysis, Harris (1969) proposed that the goal of group treatment is the restoration of the freedom to change. This freedom grows from knowing the truth about what is in the dogma and what is in the feeling area of the personality and how this data feeds into present-day transactions. It also requires the truth, or the evidence

about the world in which he lives. Such freedom requires the knowledge that everyone with whom one deals has a Parent, an Adult, and a Child. With this awareness and identity, we embrace values independently with the Adult. Three things make people want to change. One is that they hurt sufficiently. They have hit the bottom and want to change. Another thing is boredom and a third thing that makes people want to change is the sudden discovery that they can. The Adult is the place where the action is, where hope resides, and where change is possible. Harris (1969) contends that the child does not possess the equipment and experience necessary to form an accurate picture of himself, so his only guide is the reactions of others to him. Therefore, there is little cause for him to question the reflections of others. He is too helpless to challenge them or to rebel against them. He passively accepts the judgments, which are communicated clearly to him at first, by words, gestures, and deeds. Self-attitudes, then, are learned early in life and carried forever by the individual. Some allowances must be made for the influence of the environment and modification by choice through later experience.

Therefore, in looking at the depth of need and desire, all human beings are reaching for the reinforcement of their

personal environmental world. The teacher who has accepted himself, his dogma, his feelings, and is willing to work out decisions and changes will communicate to his students the freedom to grow, change, and maintain communication with his world.

A group of high school teachers were asked to state what they felt they wanted or needed from their schools. The comments below are written exactly as stated.

I want a feeling of being a part of a team that is working for one goal.

I need to be made aware that someone knows the amount of work that I do.

What I would like from this school:
1. Students succeed
2. Better students
3. More money
4. The continued freedom I now enjoy.
5. More teaching aids
6. A closer related faculty

Professional growth
Professional & personal respect
Belief from peers in ability
Support from administration & peers

An understanding from fellow educators for the disadvantaged and handicapped child.

To be assured that I am doing a good job.
To be able to become friends with the faculty.
To be appreciated.

I want more cooperation from some of my students, so I can help them better fulfill their needs, so that they can better perform whatever it is that they do after leaving school.

I would like to have more encouragement from some supervisor or administrator.
I would like to have some things done to improve the environment in which I work.

Better communication

OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUTREACH

1. Concern groups. Counselors/principals can lead concern groups where teachers come together to talk about special areas which tend to lead to dissatisfaction. These groups can be a positive approach to combating the "gripe" sessions which often evolve in the teachers lounge. In high schools a good time is during "off" period where the make-up of the group will be interdepartmental. With a leader, destructive or critical attacks can be turned into positive action. These should meet regularly, once a week and later once a month. Coffee and cookies in the counselor's area makes a good setting and an opportunity for counselor outreach.
2. In-put Day. The counseling department in cooperation with the administration can set aside an afternoon after school or morning prior to school for time for teachers and staff to have "in-put". This session should be held regularly so that everyone will know when and where the meeting will be held. The meeting can be open to all teachers to come in to share ideas, concerns, suggestions, discouragements on a completely volunteer basis. If no one appears, the leaders should remain steady until it develops. It may take several months before the concept is understood. This arrangement offers an excellent opportunity for each person to feel he has a "chance" to correct or extend services. Also, counselor or administrator will often want to use this session as a leveler--suggesting to

the disturbed person, "How about bringing that to the in-put session Thursday afternoon and let's talk about that."

An additional service could develop to include parents and students. A secretary present to take notes would be helpful. Report back to the session on changes made or not made adds to the validity of such a session.

3. Principal's Advisory Council. The election of such a council can serve not only as a reflection to the administration of school needs, but as part of the listening strength to the two above mentioned opportunities. This gives the school a voice in its organizational structure.

4. Lunch appointments. Counselors can make appointments to eat lunch with certain teachers/or students. This way the teacher looks forward to a special time with the counselor preferrably for personal and social interaction rather than professional. If a large faculty presents a problem, the counselor might prepare a special table once a week at various times for alternating schedules with flowers, place cards, or some specialty.

5. Teacher-Counseling. One-to-one sessions with teachers either in the counseling office or in their rooms during their off time can be an important part of building relationships. The counselor does the asking with a "May I come by sometime to get better acquainted?" or "Could you come by Thursday during fourth period so we can spend some time together?" This can be especially helpful to new teachers.

6. Social activities. Early morning coffee and doughnuts once a week or cookies and coffee for after school faculty meetings

or "jam" sessions can unite a faculty. Covered dishes on special workdays with recipe sharing adds a personal touch. Most schools find that social activities planned at night outside school accomplish little toward faculty unity. This seems to be especially ineffective in larger metro areas where distance is a problem.

7. Group arrangement. Seating arrangements make a difference in group attitude. The best arrangement seems to be a circle without tables where every member of the group can see every other member. For large groups where this is not possible, small groups around tables or in small circles seems to be second best. Some time should be spent intermittently in mixing activities so that all the time is not spent with intradepartment or grade level contacts.

8. Recognition. Recognizing birthdays or special events adds a personal touch--even a bulletin board featuring teachers whose birthdays fall during that month. Summer birthdays can be handled the last month of school. A note from the principal/counselor the morning of a teacher birthday can lift the spirit of the day.

9. Training opportunities. Counselors can offer special technique training classes or filmstrip programs to be attended voluntarily after school. This has been very successful in some schools as a service of the counseling department.

10. Personal Group Involvement. Special sessions in personal growth can be held for volunteer groups who like closeness, growth opportunities, or who need group support. These sessions

tend to add a depth perspective to any faculty. Tools which can be used are T.A. groups, self-awareness groups, or values groups. Many methods in group and personal awareness may be used.

11. Opening of School Involvement. Intermix activities during the first few days of pre-planning sessions give the faculty some opportunities to gain a feeling of belonging. Oftentimes members tend to feel isolated as new-comers move in. These activities need to be repeated from time to time during the year.

12. Faculty Bibliotherapy. The Counselor can build a library of materials regarding personal growth and group awareness as well as behavioral principles for teachers to read. A "let me lend you a book" can be an important link to the classroom.

13. Project Teaming. Any time a counselor develops a program for classroom guidance, he opens the door for teaming with a teacher. Decision making, conflict resolution, problem solving, or career awareness lend great material for incorporation into many subject-matter classrooms. These offerings give teachers and counselors a chance to work together.

14. Commons Room. A place set aside for teachers, and students to meet socially can add a dimension to school cooperation. This may be a lounge, a corner of the cafeteria when lunch is not being served or a conference room in the library. Teachers and students then become involved in sharing concepts and personal values.

15. Counseling Center for Teachers. Teachers often feel awkward in asking for counseling services within their own school. However, if good rapport is established between counselor and teacher, this service will often suffice. Otherwise, in larger school systems, afternoon or evening counseling services can be offered in a central location. Teachers can then make appointments away from the school where counseling may seem safer and more confidential.

The counselor can be described as "the heartbeat of the school", "the safe harbor", "the roaming conscience", "the center of loving and caring", "the creative nurturer". Any outreach which provides such an opportunity gives expression to those descriptions. But, first of all, the counselor must be in contact with the deep inner resources of himself--only then can he reach into his tool box and reach out.

*The masculine form of the pronoun is used in this paper for convenience. The form is intended to be inclusive of both male and female members of the community.

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